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ARBORCIDE!

Parks Dept kills Heights trees — then charges a patsy with murder

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Papers

Five Brooklyn Heights residents in the prime of their lives were murdered in broad daylight last week — and a man who fought to keep them alive has been charged in the crime even though he didn't pull the trigger.

The actual killers of two London plane trees and three gingkoes — which stood for decades in front of a large apartment tower at 75 Henry St. — were workers for the New York City Parks Department.

The Case of the Terminated Trees reads like a mystery novel — except this isn't a whodunnit, but a whydunnit.

The roots of this tall tale go back to November, when contractors renovating the cement plaza at the apartment building may have damaged the 35-year-old trees.

Or maybe not.

"We got hit with summonses and received a letter from the Parks Department saying we damaged the trees and they had to be removed at our expense," explained an engineer from York Restoration, who requested anonymity because the murder charge is being appealed.

The company's owner, George York, hired arborist Don Venezia, who inspected the allegedly wounded trees.

"At this time," Venezia wrote, "the trees have set bud and in my opinion are alive and healthy." Venezia said that one of the gingkoes has "some small root damage, less than one inch," but suggested that the problem could be remedied by trimming "the damaged roots."

The Parks Department did not accept Venezia's diagnosis. "Brooklyn forestry requests that these



Four of the five tree stumps that remain in front of 75 Henry St. after the Parks Department chopped down their 35-year-old tops.

trees are removed due to root damage ASAP."

Matthew Wells, a department forester, wrote back.

York offered a compromise — namely that the trial be put on hold until the spring to see if the

trees were thriving. If they were not, York promised to replace them.

But the company got no response until last week, when Parks Department workers showed up with chainsaws and started removing the trees.

"One of the workers stopped cutting after he removed the first branch and called his supervisor because the tree was alive," said the York engineer. "He said, 'Are you sure I have the right tree?' But he was told to keep cutting. That's how crazy this whole thing is."

But as with any good murder story, George Della Latta, president of the building's co-op board, thinks nefarious forces are at work.

"The way I figure it, the lifespan of a street tree is, what, 20 years?" Latta said.

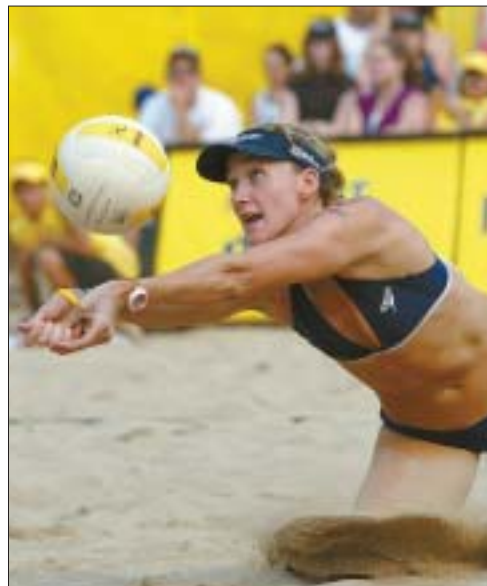
"So the Parks Department figures they're going to have to replace these trees anyway, so why not find a way to make someone else not only pay for their removal, but pay to replace them, too?"

Latta has been sharing his theory with elected officials and even reporter David Diaz, who does the "Shame on You!" segment on WCBN-Channel 2 news.

The Parks Department did not return repeated calls for comment.

The irony is that the trees were allegedly damaged during ongoing construction that will transform the barren cement plaza at 75 Henry St. into a lushly landscaped sitting area.

Some of the lost trees actually appear in the architectural renderings of the \$4-million project.



Sights of summer

Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards project remains controversial, but there's nothing ire-provoking about his latest initiative — a deal to bring Kerri Walsh (above) and other top pro volleyball stars to Coney Island this summer. See story, back page.

Sad day for single freaks

Dick Zigun is off the market

THE BROOKLYN
ANGLE By Gersh Kuntzman



Recently engaged Dick Zigun photographed in a fun house mirror at Coney Island.

HATE TO BREAK the news to you, Rubber Girl, Insecta-vora, Helen Melon and Keroseene Queen, but the cliché is finally true: the good ones are all gone.

Dick Zigun, the king of all the geeks, freaks and wonders of the

man curiosity at Coney Island's famous Circus Sideshow, is engaged to be married.

To a human being, no less!

But she's a freak at heart, Zigun's fiancée, Pat Mukuro, is not only a Nigerian pop singer, but, if you believe the entirely untrustworthy Zi-

gun, she's also an Uthobo princess.

All that Josephine Baker was to Paris, Princess Pat will be to New York," Zigun said. "The world of the weird better watch out for the John and Yoko of the 21st century."

Zigun claims the pair met in 1997 at the Mermaid Parade. Years later, she became renowned for her butchery of the national anthem.

"She didn't really know the tune, and halfway through, she forgot the words and it became a crazy a capella moment," said Fred Kahl, a.k.a. The Great Fredini, a longtime sideshow performer.

Mukuro returned to her native Africa to pursue her recording career, but via problems kept her from Zigun's side (among other parts of his body — oooft).

The marriage is now scheduled for next week in Cyprus, chosen for obvious reasons.

"When Zeus was killed, his genitals were thrown into the ocean and they landed near Cyprus," Zigun said. "And Aphrodite was born out of the sea foam."

Zigun said Mukuro will eventually assume her rightful place as a sideshow star: "I'm thinking Madame Tivoli for her."

Cocoa without pier

City: Move it from Hook to Sunset Park

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Papers

A cocoa-filled freighter — unable to unload its cargo because of a dispute between the Port Authority and the operators of Brooklyn's last working port — has been ordered to drop anchor and unload downriver at a vacant Sunset Park pier.

The decision ended a two-week stalemate whose implications go beyond the fate of 250,000 burlap sacks of cocoa beans from

the Ivory Coast — touching on such third rails as city politics, the future of the Port of New York and even the development of the Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Caught in the middle is Kip Walk, whose Blommer Chocolate is the largest cocoa processor in the world and depends on the Red Hook pier.

"I'm just trying to move some cocoa here, but New York City politics keep not letting me," Walk said.

Walk said that his company lost \$3,000 a day as the city and the Port Authority debat-

ed whether to make port space available elsewhere.

Walk's bittersweet cargo had been stranded on the East River since January 15, when the Port Authority refused to allow American Stevedoring, which operates Pier 9, to unload the 600-foot cargo ship at the nearby Pier 6, saying that the company was mismanaging its port traffic.

"When you have cargo that wants to unload, why is the [city] telling them they don't know where they can go?" asked Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn

Heights), as a circle of dockworkers gathered around the ship last week.

"The city is not willing to let these piers keep going," Yassky added.

Pier operators had hoped to unload the ship at Pier 6 — but that site is now earmarked for a high-rise development that is part of the "park" plan, so the city ruled it off-limits.

While the city, Port Authority and American Stevedoring negotiated, Blommer decided not to risk another shipment to governmental paralysis in New York and rerouted a second ship hauling \$8 million in cocoa to Baltimore.



Stuffed animals and balloons mark the corner where 10-year-old Markita Nicole Weaver was killed by a snowplow.

After a year, city admits guilt in Hook child's death

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Papers

The Bloomberg administration this week marked the one-year anniversary of the death of 10-year-old girl under a city snowplow in an odd manner — by finally admitting that a city worker did indeed kill her.

The Department of Sanitation had long denied that one of its drivers crushed Red Hook resident Markita Nicole Weaver as she played with her friends in the snow on Jan. 23, 2005.

But as reporters started preparing their one-year anniversary stories, the

bureaucracy finally changed tactics.

A spokeswoman for the city Law Department said the agency had admitted guilt.

The spokeswoman, Kate O'Brien Ahlers, said, "The city has expressed in writing to Maria Jimenez, Markita Weaver's mother, our profound regret and sorrow on her daughter's death."

Friends and family marked the actual one-year anniversary by building a makeshift memorial at the corner of Richards and Walcott streets, where Weaver died.

Witnesses had long said that a city snowplow had crushed Weaver, but

the Department of Sanitation found "nothing conclusive that would connect the department to the accident."

In fact, investigators were in possession of hair and blood samples taken from one of the snow plows — and that tissue matched Weaver.

"I have no idea why this admission took a year, but the NYPD claims it was using a new kind of forensic test," said Beth Schlossman, the Weaver family lawyer.

The family is suing the city for \$85 million. At the same time Jimenez was receiving the city's apology letter, Schlossman said she received a letter to initiate settlement talks.

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Canadian educator, philosopher, scholar, and one of the founders of the study of media ecology

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KIDS SCHOOL STYLE

The Brooklyn Papers

TEENS CAMPS MUSIC

Live there? You would have to be a DUMBO!

A BROKEN CLOCK is right twice a day, so when Dumb Editor asked Smartmom look into the sudden influx of new moms in industrial DUMBO, Smartmom blew him off. But Dumb Editor persisted.

"I can't think of anyone better to investigate the phenomenon than you," he said, buttering her up like a scone at Connecticut Muffin. "After all, these new moms are are you 15 years ago."

How old does he think Smartmom is? But Dumb Editor had a point. Smartmom was pushing Teen Spirit in a Combi stroller when Park Slope, like DUMBO now, was experiencing its first baby boom.

So Smartmom changed out of her schleppy Park Slope uniform (PS 321 T-shirt, black stretch pants), donned her snazziest jeans and leather jacket (so as to blend in with the DUMBO crowd) and took a car service to the Pirate Playground, located on the banks of the East River. With its views of the Brooklyn Bridge and lower Manhattan, it is, arguably, the most spectacular set of monkey bars in the world.

Ever the urban anthropologist, Smartmom was eager to eavesdrop on DUMBO moms. Were their conversations like those in Park Slope, where the playground chatter seems to revolve around Food Coop suspensions, missed real-estate opportunities, or early intervention programs? Or did they whine about their art dealer?

Smartmom discreetly sidled up to a couple of moms who were talking intensely while watching their sons play.

But it turns out that DUMBO is the worst possible neighborhood for eavesdropping. The traffic and subway on the Manhattan Bridge overwhelms the entire area, making the playground way too noisy for subtle surveillance.

"How do you like living here?" Smartmom asked one of the moms, who was chiding dressed in a suede jacket, tight suede pants and Uggs Boots. Smartmom really wanted to ask how the heck

they get their babies to nap, given the constant ruckus.

Ugg Mom looked suspicious, but soon warmed to the idea of her 15-minutes of fame. "Oh I love it. Just love it," she said. "It's so urban, so much more like Manhattan than Park Slope or Brooklyn Heights. There's a great sense of community here."

Smartmom ran after Ugg Mom and asked her if there's much to do with kids around here. "Tons. There's

SMART mom

tons to do. It's a fantastic, family-oriented neighborhood."

Then she shoed Smartmom away. "I hope you don't mind, but I'd like to talk to my friend."

Manhattan, indeed. Nearby were two Caribbean nannies, so Smartmom chatted them up.

"I hate this neighborhood," said one, as she rocked a bright orange Bugaboo. "It's so boring." The other one added. They seemed eager to share the winter of their discontent.

"There's nothing to do, especially in the cold," said the first. "No bookstore, no indoor play space, no Barnes & Noble. There's nowhere to take the children."

SMARTMOM FOUND another mom who was watching her kid in the row-boat sandbox. A Q-train crossed the bridge overhead.

"DO YOU FIND IT NOISY HERE?" Smartmom screamed. "It's not too bad," the woman said, clearly too deaf to notice anymore.

After the playground, Smartmom was eager to check out Pomme, a wildly pretentious French children's store. Children's store? It looked more like the Whitney Biennial!

Smartmom watched as a high-looking local mom charged more than \$200 on a credit card for extravagant birthday party gifts, while

speaking French with the owner.

IGNORING HER (who has time to speak French these days?), Smartmom occupied herself with the store's publicity postcard: "Pomme is smitten with childhood: imaginary friends and security blankets. Side-walk chalk, smocks, knee-high socks." Preentious? Mais bien sur. But then again, the prices for cashmere sweaters, black under-

wear sets, and French toys matched the shop's inflated view of itself.

Next, Smartmom walked past 70 Washington St., David Valencia's condo, where lofts are selling for millions.

Around the corner at Foragers, a new Dean & DeLuca-style grocery, young mothers stocked up on expensive porcini mushrooms and hydroponic tomatoes. It looked like a Manhattan version of the Park Slope Coop.

Without the low prices, neighborhood co-workers and social consciousness.

On Front Street, Smartmom peered into the window of a gigantic showroom for Thermador, Bosch and Gaggenau appliances: all the designer gadgets you need to perfectly enjoy the kind of huge loft kitchen that you never plan to use.

Nearly, a young mom struggled with a tantrum-throwing toddler and a double-stroller on the bumpy cobblestone streets.

"Do you need some help?" Smartmom asked, perhaps with a note of condescension.

"No thanks," Supernom said.

But Smartmom persisted, asking how she puts up with the inconveniences of living in a still-industrial area. And it was home. You know what Dorothy said: there's no place like it.

Louise Crawford also runs the Web site, "Only the Blog Knows Brooklyn."

Use the cobblestones, the noise, the trucks.

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POLICE BLOTTER

3 teens robbed on way home

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

The trip home from school proved hazardous for three teenagers who were robbed in separate afternoon attacks around Fort Greene and Downtown this week — one involving five thugs and a knife, cops said.

Detectives with the 84th Precinct are now looking to see if the heists are connected.

In the first attack, a teenage thief snatched a video game player from a Catholic school student riding home on the G train on Jan. 13, according to police.

The 14-year-old victim left Bishop Ford Central High School, on 19th Street near Ninth Avenue, at the end of the school day. He rode the F train to Bergen Street, where he switched to the G, heading home, police said.

When the youngster pulled out his portable video game player and plugged in a cartridge, it attracted the interest of another teenage straphanger.

As the train rumbled along, the boy approached and snatched the toy, plus the \$40 game, and bolted the train at the Fulton Street stop, police said.

But the 14-year-old wasn't about to give it up so easily, so he jumped off the train too, pursuing the thief up to street level. He chased the robber to the corner of Fulton and South Portland streets, where the trail went cold.

But the victim dialed 911 from a pay phone and provided police with a description of the suspect.

That led police to a 15-year-old, who was arrested on robbery charges at the corner of South Oxford and Lafayette streets. But it was too late to recover the victim's game.

Three days later, a teenager lost his cellphone and \$4 to robbers who attacked him while he made his way home from school on Tillary Street, police said.

The two thugs jumped the 16-year-old victim from behind as he reached the corner of Tillary and Duffield streets, just past noon.

The thieves became violent, punching his face until he had a black eye and a bruised jaw.

They then snatched his cellphone, swiped the cash from his pockets, and ran off, police said.

The boy provided very few details about the appearance of his attackers, police said.

The next day, a mob of five thugs — possibly armed with a knife — jumped a 14-year-old walking home from school, according to police.

As the boy reached the corner of Tillary Street, near Jay Street, he noticed he was being followed, police said. The five thieves spread out and surrounded him, and a tall, skinny man stepped forward to rifle his pockets.

The skinny man snatched the victim's cellphone and bolted with his accomplices along Tillary Street.

The boy said his attackers were all black men, ranging in height from 5-foot-8 to the skinny man, at 6-foot-1, who was dressed in a black, fur-trimmed leather jacket.

The boy didn't mention a knife to cops, but police said his mother called later to say the men who robbed her son were armed with a blade of some sort.

Group grabs a Gucci bag

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

A woman lost her luxury purse and hundreds of dollars in new clothes to a trio of thieves who surrounded her in Boerum Hill on Jan. 20, police said.

The 29-year-old woman was walking to the subway around 6:45 pm when the strangers snuck up behind her at the corner of State and Hoyt streets, grabbed her pocketbook and three shopping bags, and fled south on Hoyt Street, police said.

The victim described her attackers as black men — one 5-foot-10 and dressed in a black jacket, a black hat and white sneakers, another 6-foot-2 and 160 pounds, and the third 5-foot-10 and 175 pounds.

The stolen goods included the victim's Gucci purse and matching wallet, credit cards and \$200 cash, plus the \$375 in clothing and accessories from Armani and Express that she had just bought, police said.

A thief snatched the purse of a woman burdened with several bags as she entered the Jay Street subway station on Jan. 20, police said.

The 46-year-old victim had unloaded her belongings from the B61 bus and was making her way down the steps of the station, at Willowby and Jay streets, around 11 am. That's when the thugs pounced, snatching the purse from her shoulder and bolting onto the street before his victim could see his face, according to police.

The blue purse held credit and bank cards, an ID card and house keys. By the time the victim cancelled her credit card, the robber had already rung up \$24 in charges, police said.

Overwhelmed
The 36-year-old resident returned home around 1:50 pm to discover a woman she didn't know leaving her house, near the corner of Nevins Street, police said. When the stranger spotted her, she ducked back into the house and alerted her accomplice. Suddenly a strange man emerged, carrying a gym bag in each of his hands.

The man — whom she described as Hispanic, 5-foot-8 and 180 pounds, dressed in a black jacket — rushed down Nevins Street with the bounty in hand. The woman — who was also Hispanic, 5-foot-3 and 120 pounds, and wearing an orange coat — jumped in a gray vehicle that also sped away on Nevins Street, but not before the victim could record the license-plate number, according to police.

The stolen goods included a laptop computer and a printer, a digital camera, CD and DVD players and assorted jewelry, police said.

Cash grab
Robbers stole bags of cash from two delivery vans in separate heists on Downtown streets this week. Both vans belonged to vending companies based in Queens.

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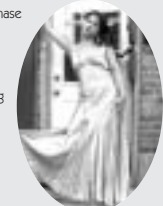
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A parishioner points to the gift box at Park Slope's Holy Family Church, at Fourth Avenue and Ninth Street, that has been robbed three times in the past two years.

Holy burglary!

By Lilo H. Stainton

The Brooklyn Papers

For the third time in two years, burglars broke into the Holy Family Church in Park Slope, stealing donations from the collection box while the Roman Catholic facility was closed for the night, police and church officials said.

The Holy Family heist came just eight days after a priest at St. Thomas Aquinas, a Catholic church nearby on Fourth Avenue and Ninth Street, discovered a prowler in his bedroom closet.

In that case, however, nothing was stolen, police said.

In the latest break-in, the longtime secretary at Holy Family — arrived for work around 8 am on Jan. 17, to find a window on the side of the church bashed in. The sight

made her heart sink, she said.

The house of worship — on 14th Street near Fourth Avenue — was also robbed last spring and in 2004.

"It was the same glass window," said the secretary, who declined to give her name out of fear of revenge. "They have an agenda, these people."

The thief pried open the window, then climbed down by stepping onto a chair and walked into the vestibule, according to police and the secretary.

Once inside, the thief removed an unknown amount of money from two collection boxes next to a pair of candle racks, where the faithful deposit \$1 for a prayer candle. The cash boxes had traditionally been emptied once a week, but that policy will definitely be changed.

"They're going to be emp-

ted more often," she said, noting that church leaders are also thinking about installing a security camera.

According to Holy Family leaders, at least two other Catholic churches in Park Slope have been burglarized during the same two-year period. Perps struck St. John the Evangelist during the spring of 2005 and also hit St. Thomas Aquinas in 2004, they noted.

Local police would not comment on whether there is an unholy pattern emerging.

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10th Street man is tossed to ground, robbed outside home

By Lilo H. Stainton

The Brooklyn Papers

Two masked thugs jumped a 10th Street resident as he opened his front door on Jan. 18, police said.

The 51-year-old victim arrived at his home, near Fifth Avenue, around 9:30 pm. But as he put the key into the lock, the muggers grabbed him from behind and tossed him to the pavement, where they punched and kicked him. One thug demanded, "Gimme your money," and snatched the man's wallet.

The pair of thieves then dashed down Fifth Avenue, police said.

The victim said his attackers were Hispanic men, both roughly 5-foot-10 and 160 pounds, according to police. One wore a black snorkel jacket and both covered their faces with black ski masks.

The man's wallet contained bank and credit cards, his New York State pistol license and the registration for his 1999 Chrysler, police said.

WT bank heist

A thief armed with a note escaped with nearly \$3,700 from a bank on Prospect Park West on Jan. 21, police said. But the tattooed bandit left behind a lasting impression on the staff — fingerprints and his image burned into video on the bank's security camera.

POLICE BLOTTER

Robbed on 6th

A St. Johns Place resident lost his wallet to a pair of black-clad muggers who attacked him on his home street Jan. 14, police said.

The 36-year-old man neared the corner of Sixth Avenue at around 6 pm when two strangers blocked his path, and one demanded, "Give me your wallet." After the victim complied, the pair ran off, police said.

The man said the muggers were both black men, roughly 5-foot-5 and 120 pounds, dressed in traditional mugger-wear: black hats, black pants and black sweatshirts, according to police. The wallet held \$30, gas and credit cards and his driver's license.

Armed mug

A knife-wielding robber stole cash and a card key from a man on Berkeley Place on Jan. 18, police said.

The thief jumped his 38-year-old victim at 7:50 pm, as the man walked between Sixth and Flatbush avenues — less than a block from his home, according to police. With the weapon in hand, the mugger said, "Don't make me hurt you," and snatched the victim's wallet.

Police said the thief removed \$20 and a card key from the billfold and ran away on Sixth Avenue toward the Bergen Street subway station.

Subway attack

A Maryland woman fought off a mugger who tried to steal her bag in the Seventh Avenue B train station on Jan. 15, police said.

The 26-year-old woman was waiting on the Bronx-bound platform with her sister, 27, a resident of Manhattan, when a man tried to grab the pocketbook from her shoulder, around 11:45 pm. The sister ran to her aid, and the women struggled with the mugger, who gave up and ran from the station. The women described him as a black man, 5-foot-6 and 160 pounds, dressed in blue pants, tan boots and a black leather jacket.

Techno thief

A burglar snatched \$2,700 in electronics from a Ninth Street apartment while the tenant was at work on Jan. 17, police said.

The 25-year-old victim left her home, at Eighth Avenue,

at 9 am. When she returned at 7 pm, she found someone had pushed in the air-conditioning unit attached to a second-floor window and robbed her apartment, according to police.

The stolen items included over two dozen DVDs and CDs, a Sony stereo, a Dell laptop and an HP desktop computer, police said.

Biz robbed

A robber stole \$2,600 in merchandise from the basement of a radio and electronics store on Seventh Avenue that was closed for the night on Jan. 16, police said.

A 26-year-old worker at the well-known national franchise, at Fifth Street, arrived at 7:30 am on Jan. 17 to find the padlock on the cellar-door snapped.

Once inside the basement storage area, the burglar helped himself to a pair of HP laptops, a Sony home stereo system and other items.

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'Industrial' hearing set

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Papers

On the eve of a vital public hearing to discuss freezing residential development in parts of Sunset Park and Red Hook, property owners are being actively courted by interest groups on both sides of the issue.

The hearing will be a chance for public officials, planners and business owners to speak out on a city plan to

preserve industrial zoning.

The so-called Industrial Business Zones are drawn by the city in a contentious debate over preserving what is fast becoming an endangered species in Sunset Park — factory and warehouse buildings that can't be converted into profitable condos or lofts.

That explains why one form letter sent to warehouse and factory owners in Sunset Park reminded property owners that the hearing at City Hall on Feb.

3 would "prohibit residential rezoning in the area."

The letter writer, Ofra Cohen of Massey Knakal Realty Services, said the "ultimate goal [of his letter] is to... help property owners like you make informed decisions about their real estate assets."

In other words, Cohen favors the current zoning, which allows property owners to apply for zoning variances that could lead to residential redevelopment — a profitable

venture that is transforming much of industrial Brooklyn.

But letters like Cohen's are provoking the ire of some of their recipients.

"An industrial building [that can be redeveloped into housing] sells for three times as much as regular industrial buildings," said Phaedra Thomas, executive director of the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation.

"The inflated values make it really hard for someone to expand his business or develop an industrial building for an industrial tenant, but it works for a Realtor who makes money on his commissions."

Thomas said she has been urging businesses owners in her group to attend the meeting and voice support for the business zoning plan.

In addition to a stretch of Sunset Park from Third Avenue to the waterfront, the city proposes the zones for a section of the Red Hook waterfront and in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Jailed, they sue feds

Associated Press

Four men who claim they were illegally jailed and abused at the federal detention center in Sunset Park following the Sept. 11 attacks have returned to the United States to give depositions in a civil rights lawsuit against the government.

The men — brothers Yasser and Hany Ibrahim and Ashraf Ibrahim (no relation), who are from Egypt, and Frenchman Asifur-Rehman — were questioned earlier this week at an undisclosed location in the city, their lawyers said.

The federal government has demanded tight restrictions for the men. They were to be watched by federal marshals at all times and barred from speaking to anyone outside of the case — conditions Bill Goodman, legal director for the Center for Constitutional Rights, called excessive.

"Not one of these men was found to have any connection with terrorism," he said.

The suit was filed in 2002 in Brooklyn federal court by Muslim and Arab men who were detained on alleged immigration violations following the Sept. 11 attacks. The suit claims former Attorney General John Ashcroft, prison personnel, FBI supervisors and other officials violated the men's rights by imprisoning them on the basis of their race and religion.

The Department of Justice had no immediate comment about the depositions, but officials have denied any wrongdoing.

The case was bolstered by a 2003 report by the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General, which found "significant problems" with the treatment of nearly 800 detainees nationwide, including abusive conditions at the Metropolitan Detention Center in

Sunset Park, where the men were held, along with 75 other people "of high interest" to the FBI.

Such prisoners were classified "suspected terrorists" and put in high-security cell blocks normally reserved for dangerous inmates.

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BCAT Program Guide — What's on Brooklyn Community Access Television

A Road to New Expression

by Marianna Hernandez

WHEN ARTIST OLEN HSU MOVED TO NEW YORK FROM CHICAGO TWO YEARS AGO, HE WANTED TO ENHANCE HIS KNOWLEDGE AND CREATE A STEPPINGSTONE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

Hsu, who studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, works with large-scale installation and rhythmically composed sound but wanted to branch out further and explore another field. That is when he discovered an opportunity for an artists' residency at BCAT/Brooklyn Community Access Television, to study web design.

"Learning a new skill is wonderful because you never know when you might need it. I do installation work and it is a part of me, but I wanted to learn something else — something I can either relate to my work or be able to use in the future," he said.

Each year, BCAT, developer and manager of four public access television channels, and the Rotunda Gallery, a not-for-profit exhibition space for contemporary art, sponsor a joint residency program to make BCAT's Media Center and training programs available to professional Brooklyn-based artists. BCAT and the Rotunda Gallery are programs of BRIC/Brooklyn Information & Culture.

Hsu received a grant to attend multimedia classes at BCAT where he learned to use Photoshop, After Effects and how to design a web page using Macromedia Dreamweaver. He is now able to manage his own online portfolio.

Now in its eighth year, the residency, which is supported by a grant from the Electronic Media and Film Program at the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), allows fifteen artists who live or work in Brooklyn to gain valuable experience in television studio production,

remote video editing, or multimedia production, as well as training and technical assistance in video and digital production and post-production technologies, at no cost.

Upon completion of the training program, artists are given an allotment of up to fifty hours of lab time to work on independent projects, which can then be cablecast on BCAT. A stipend of \$200 is provided to each of the artists selected and the training fee is waived.

According to Patrick Grenier, Rotunda Gallery's associate director, the residency program serves to educate and introduce new talent to the field. "It allows for a new body of work to be created and to be brought into their own profession. The best part is that you do not need any previous experience in video or multimedia to apply. You just need to have the interest," he says.

Brooklynite and grant recipient Cynthia Lovett works with computers and installation and teaches at College of New Jersey and wanted to learn about video editing.

Last spring, she attended BCAT's four week basic video production workshop where she learned the process of shooting, lighting, audio and non-linear editing using digital video to create and complete a project. "It was a good introduction. I found it very accessible, flexible, easy to work around, and a way to meet other people who are interested in the same thing," she says.

Lovett, who studied at Tyler School of Art, Howard University in D.C., and at the New York University



Brooklyn artist Cynthia Lovett sets up a video shot with card players; her animations will appear on the surrounding walls in the final version.

Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP), recently completed a new project at BCAT to which she added her art and video installation skills. The project, which features different groups of men playing cards and dominoes, was shot from multiple cameras to portray various points of view. It can be seen this week as part of a group show curated by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

Greg Sutton, executive producer of BCAT, noted that what makes the program so unique is that "it gives Brooklyn artists access to a world-class media program and also allows them to collaborate with BRIC's sister programs — and that, in turn, helps strengthen our organization," says Sutton.

Another artist who participated in the program is Larry Racioppo, an avid photographer whose work is part of the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, The Museum of the City of New York, The New York Historical Society and the New York Public Library.

Racioppo said the course he took helped him to revive his dream of video production. "Now that I've taken the course, I want to work with video and editing and see if I can put the people behind my photographs and their thoughts on video."

BCAT and the Rotunda Gallery are gearing up for another round of grants. All Brooklyn-affiliated artists are invited to apply by February 28, 2006 for this year's fifteen slots. For more information about the residency program, log on to www.bcat.tv/bcat or call 718-875-4047 x10.

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

January 28, 2006

Harry, hairy night

Clothing is tossed aside in hirsute's pursuit of canned meat

By Lee Cabot Walker
for The Brooklyn Papers

Armed with two beers worth of courage, a notebook and pen, I entered Freddy's Bar & Backroom in Prospect Heights on a recent Wednesday evening.

I'm here to be entertained. I'm considering becoming an entertainer myself.

Mostly, I am going to watch some Brooklynites vie for a very special prize: 48 ounces of 97 percent fat-free pork with added gelatin and natural juices, valued at \$2.99 a pound. A Krakus brand, canned Polish ham, to be precise.

The "Karaoke Big Ass Ham" contest is staged at Freddy's on the third Wednesday of every month. "Are you a ham?" is the main question the contest asks of its participants, each of whom responds by singing horrendously, loudly, humbly—and often repeatedly—songs from a list of nearly 200 by all the karaoke-friendly artists you'd expect: Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Don McLean, Bee Gees, Queen and Diana Ross.

The hammiest performance wins the canned meat, awarded by the KBAH Master of Ceremonies, the charming Bill Carney. The karaoke contest takes place in Freddy's backroom, in front of about 10 wooden tables.

"This is the alternative to sliced, spiral ham," Carney says of the prize as I pore over the playlist for that perfect ham-winning song. "I think the spirals are not all they're cracked up to be. This ham is straightforward. You cut and you serve."

I was soon to discover that KBAH regulars are liable to go to great lengths to win this cholesterol-rich prize.

"I want that ham," demands one contestant as she pines with her back to the 20-person crowd, awaiting her cue to spin around dramatically and begin. "At first I was afraid, I was petrified..."

Tony Limacuo, the technician who sets up the speakers and microphones and provides the free karaoke MP3s from his laptop, explains the Krakus ham's allure.

"Krakus is a delicacy," Limacuo says. "I grew up on Guam, and around holidays, the American military would give away free Krakus hams to the locals. Oh, Krakus was fancy—much better than Hormel."

Carney agrees, explaining that the prize is "delicious" when washed (washed?) and cooked with orange juice, honey, maple syrup and cloves, as one previous KBAH winner prepared it.

Carney kicks off the evening, buttering his voice to make it sound like Presley in "Suspicious Minds." "Caught in a trap I can't walk out because I love you too much baby." His performance is saucy; you'd never guess that Carney, by day, is an attorney for the Legal Aid Society.

The criteria for winning KBAH, as Carney lays them out, are a bit vague.

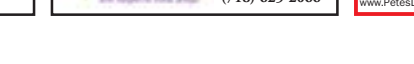
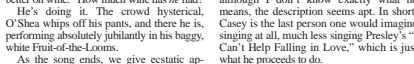
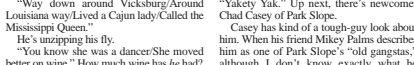
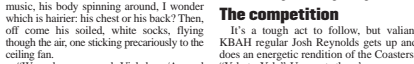
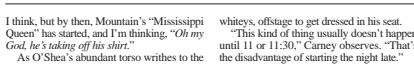
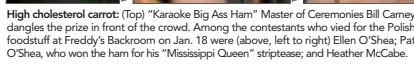
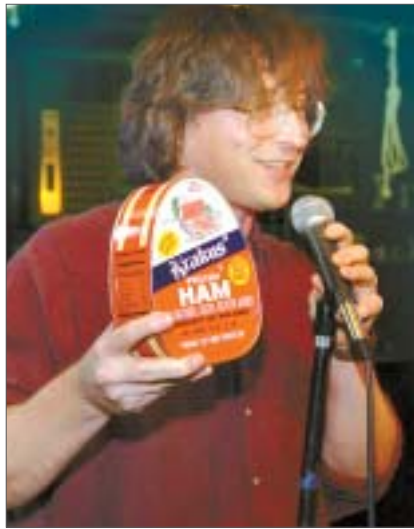
"There are a few options," Carney explains. "Number one: You channel the song's original artist. Number two: You give a personal, interpretive performance. Number three: Your performance is very stylish. Whoever is number one in that entire spectrum," he says, waving a hand emphatically, "wins. It's all equally valid, artistically."

Naked determination

The first contestant, Pat O'Shea—a stage name Peter Granite—approaches the microphones with a strut. O'Shea, also of Prospect Heights, is a regular at KBAH and is a standup comedian by trade.

The first thing I notice about him are the massive chops—sans mustache—on the side of his face. They're bushy and impressive, and little do I know, they're a sign of the follicles to come. But then I notice O'Shea's socked feet on the backroom's linoleum floor.

"That's funny—he's forgotten his shoes,"



NIGHTLIFE

The "Karaoke Big Ass Ham" contest is held at Freddy's Bar & Backroom (485 Dean St. at South Avenue in Prospect Heights) on the third Wednesday of each month. For more information, call (718) 622-7035 or visit www.karaokebigassham.com. To learn about other special events at Freddy's, see Brooklyn Nightlife on page 8.

howl-singing. His face red, he is very happy.

"Karaoke's like a natural high," Casey says. "I never did it before tonight, but tonight I was drunk, so I thought, 'What the hell!'"

"You should do it," Casey tells me. "You say you don't want to, but I know that deep down for songs I know."

The Bangles' "Eternal Flame?"

Heather McCabe, another regular who happens to sing in New York City's oldest choir, St. George's Choral Society, performs Doris Day's "Que Sera Sera" and Alicia Bridges' "I Love the Nightlife," and Ellen O'Shea—"Pat's wife—does Joan Jett's 'I Love Rock 'n' Roll,' condensing the foot-stomping, hip-swinging and eye-narrowing, as most of us would, into the 'nice, yeah, me' parts."

Stephanie Wissinger, a regular who has performed under such stage names as Surly Temple, Ivana Winna Ham and Ana Monopoe, sings Men Without Hats' "Safety Dance." It's ambitious because it's a "spelling bee and karaoke combined," she says: "S-s-s-A-a-a-a-F-f-f-E-e-e-e-T-t-t-Y-y-y/Safe, dance!"

The night is plagued by minor technical difficulties, mainly affecting the duet singers because of a troubling microphone discrepancy—one mic is piercingly loud and the other is inaudible. McCabe and Reynolds, in particular, sing Cher's "If I Could Turn Back Time," all the while struggling over the good mic.

In a later duet, O'Shea and Wissinger avert the problem by coyly sharing one mic during "California Dreamin'."

Then there were two

Pat O'Shea returns with a newly "Whip It" by Devo, marching around and again baring his hairy chest, at the end proclaiming: "That song was for everyone who didn't get laid until they were 22."

Gangsta Casey, evidently, wants that ham, too, as he revisits the stage with the Monkees' "Daydream Believer." Although he sings earnestly, the lyrics, presumably blurry on the sheet he's holding, escape him, and he becomes aggravated.

"Eaggh!" says Casey, veins popping from his neck, frustrated as he misses another cue. "I love this song!" I begin to think Casey should get the ham for the humor and drama of his passion.

O'Shea, now Casey's arch rival, returns with "Crimson and Clover," impressively simulating the underwater effect at the end: "Crimson and Clover Over and Over."

Casey approaches me again. "If you're in the crowd, you're almost expected to sing," he says. "Either you're with us or you're not. So do your thing."

He's right. I want to be with them. I decide: OCR's "Bad Moon Rising." Short and easy.

But it's too late. It's time to give away the prize; I've missed my chance.

"Who's the ham now?" I think. "Tonight, the ham goes to the hairiest performer of the evening, Pat O'Shea, a.k.a. Peter Granite!"

"All I had to do was strip twice," O'Shea says appreciatively, accepting his reward.

There is much applause from the audience, and, as the noise dies down, someone shouts, "Don't get too much hair on the ham!"

SHOPPING



Visit DUMBO

If you thought that all the waterside neighborhood of DUMBO had to offer was the Jacques Torres Chocolate Factory and the offices of The Brooklyn Papers, and you still weren't enticed to disembark the F train at York Street, there's more temptation now than ever to visit.

To entice art aficionados and shoppers Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass, residential and commercial developer Two Trees has organized "Shop DUMBO" on Jan. 28, from noon to 7 pm.

Among the galleries slated to participate in the day-long open house is the Brooklyn Arts Council, which will unveil its first-ever juried exhibition of works on paper, "Making Your Mark: On Paper" at 55 Washington St. at Front Street, Suite 218. Among the works on display will be Christopher Walsh's "Fountain 2" (pictured). From 4-6 pm, the artists will be on hand to meet and greet.

While shopping maps are available at all of DUMBO's shops and galleries, the public is encouraged to begin exploring at 111 Front St. and 68 Jay St. For more information, visit www.dumbo-newyork.com.

— Lisa J. Curtis

THEATER

Judge & jury

Are you a Simon or a Paula? Spoke the Hub puts the audience in the judge's seat with its "Winter Follies," featuring more than two dozen dance, music and multi-media artists through Jan. 29.

"This annual showcase is kind of our own funky, downtown dance-theater version of 'American Idol' (without the public humiliation and the mean-spirited Three Stooges panel of judges)," explained Spoke the Hub's Artistic Director Elise Long. "Professional performers can sign up to perform five minutes of whatever it is they do best, then the audience gets to vote on its favorite artist or group."

Among the scheduled performers is flamenco dancer Sol Koeraus (pictured), who will perform on Sunday.

The "Winter Follies" began on Jan. 27 and continues Jan. 28 and 29 at 7:30 pm (with new seatings every hour, for those who can't stay for the entire performance marathon). At the end of each evening, the audience votes on the artist or group it would like to see more of in the coming year. The performers with the most votes at the end of the weekend receive the grand prize: 50 hours of free rehearsal space plus their own weekend production at the Gowanus Arts Building in the 2006 season.

It's not a record contract, but it ain't shabby. "Winter Follies" admission is \$15 for adults, \$5 for kids. The performances will take place at the Gowanus Arts Building (295 Douglass St. between Third and Fourth avenues). For more information, call (718) 408-3234 or visit the Web site at www.spokethehub.org.

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BROOKLYN Neighborhood Dining Guide

This week:
BAY RIDGE

Arirang Hibachi Steakhouse

8814 Fourth Ave. at 89th Street, (718) 238-9880, www.partyonthehill.com (AmEx, DC, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$16.75-\$34.95.

At Arirang, open since 1993, you can dine at one of 22 hibachi tables in a "fun and relaxed atmosphere," in the words of manager Dan Guenther. At these tables, dishes such as the "Imperial Deluxe" (fillet mignon, lobster tail, shrimp and scallops) are "all prepared in front of you by expert Oriental chefs." Guenther also recommends the miso-glazed Chicken and beef — a large portion of sea bass, quickly fire-broiled and served with an assortment of Japanese pickles. There's also a calmer private dining room without hibachi, two sushi bars and two additional private party rooms. Takeout and party packages available. Open daily for dinner.

Banana Leaf

6614 Fourth Ave. at 88th Street, (718) 238-5531 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$7.95-\$22.95.

Banana Leaf chef and owner Peter How, formerly of Manhattan restaurants Jean Georges and Mercer Kitchen, serves up a medley of French, Malaysian, Indian and Thai fusion dishes at this intimate Bay Ridge bistro. GO Brooklyn dining critic Tina Barry describes How's cooking as "vibrant, light and clean, and at other times, rich and complex." Try the soft-shell crab and mango salad or the plump, pan-seared scallops dressed in red, pickled ginger. The "nasi lemak" dish, featuring jasmine rice cooked in coconut milk and served with cubes of curried chicken and anchovies that are fried with onions and lime, provides an array of pungent flavors. For dessert, try the sesame cream bun, a unique twist on its French counterpart, served with house-made strawberry ice cream and caramelized banana or the "pisang gulung," banana rolled in roti (West Indian bread).

In celebration of Chinese New Year, How plans to dish up a traditional specialty, shark fin soup with a light lobster egg drop broth, on Jan. 28 and 29. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Delivery and catering available.

Bay Ridge Sushi

6219 Third Ave. at 88th Street, (718) 491-6662 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$5-\$17.95.

Step into Jerry Lin's Bay Ridge Sushi and you're in another world: the hustle and bustle of the bay neighborhood gives way with each step inside. The engaging sushi chefs will carve up your favorites, including tuna, salmon, yellowtail, scallops, fluke, mackerel, flying fish, crab stick and many more. Of course, Bay Ridge Sushi hasn't forgotten all of the other Japanese favorites and neither will you as you select from their colorful menu. There are many hand rolls, like the shrimp tempura or the smoked salmon. Or try the pork with ginger sauce or the seafood tempaki with lobster. Just make sure to leave room for the tender green tea ice cream! Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Casa Calamari Pizza & Pasta

8602 Third Ave. at 86th Street, (718) 921-1900 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$8-\$21.95.

Boasting a large sidewalk cafe, Leo Lykourous' Casa Calamari Pizza & Pasta is a fun, family-style restaurant that makes the most of its corner windows and open kitchen. Now you'll also find all types of pizzas, rolls and calzones in addition to their Italian specialties and family seafood choices. The chilled seafood sampler (six-piece half-pound lobster, two chervilene clams, two interlock clams, four oysters and a quarter-pound of jumbo shrimp. Golden fried calamari can also be ordered with fried shrimp. Or go for the broccoli, kale, cheese and parsley-sausage platter. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Outdoor seating available mid-spring through mid-fall in its sidewalk cafe.

Chadwick's Restaurant

8822 Third Ave. at 89th Street, (718) 833-9855 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$12-\$30.

Chef Russell Tildan is no stranger to wowing Bay Ridge diners. Check out his signature dish, beef Wellington, served every Saturday night. But this 18-year-old Bay Ridge institution also offers fine French chateaufort of lamb with Lyonnaise potato, sautéed spinach and fresh mint sauce, and calzones dredged through special Japanese breadcrumbs, that owner Steve Oliver says are "so good, they were featured on The Food Network show, The Best Of...". Lunch and dinner are offered Monday through Saturday, dinner only on Sundays, beginning at 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday, a four-course, \$15.95 prix fixe lunch menu is offered from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and a three-course, \$20.95 prix fixe dinner is available from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Dish

9208 Third Ave. at 92nd Street, (718) 238-2323 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$12-\$25.

Amid bamboo plants and leather sofas, waiters serve up chef Jack Wolk's wide range of sushi, sashimi and noodles in this Japanese French fusion restaurant. The house cocktail is a lichee martini made with lichee and lime juices. Choose from appetizers that include "Lord of the Ring" (baked salmon with crab meat) or "Dynamite" (baked scallop, shrimp and mushrooms). The funky list of specialty rolls includes the "Firehouse" (jellyrimp temp-

★ = Full review available at

**Brooklyn
Papers.com**

Abbreviation Key: AmEx=American Express, DC=Diner's Club, Disc=Discover Card, MC=MasterCard, Visa=Visa Card



Casa Calamari owner Leo Lykourous outside his Third Avenue restaurant.

ra and banana topped with spicy tuna) and the "Monster" (fried crab and spicy tuna in light batter on a "sant" artificial crabmeat salad) and a heated patio is available to accommodate winter diners who smoke, for the health conscious, brown rice is a newly added option. Open daily for dinner.

Greenhouse Cafe

7717 Third Ave. at 77th Street, (718) 832-8200, www.greenhousecafe.com (AmEx, DC, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$12-\$20.

Since 1979, Brooklynites have been sitting down in one of this Bay Ridge restaurant's three dining rooms, or weather permitting, on the back deck to indulge in the menu's variety of soups, salads, pastas and meat dishes. Floor-to-ceiling windows surround one of the dining rooms in the back, giving the restaurant its name. Co-owner John Keegan recommends the rice, boneless Long Island duckling served with a fruit sauce, which changes daily. The entrée is served with fresh-cut vegetables and rice or potatoes. Also popular, according to manager Donald Rodriguez, is the seafood platter — a combination of three different fish that change daily. Keegan and his partner Bobby Daquara also own Cappuccino Cafe at 7721 Third Ave., which is also accessible from Greenhouse's interior. Cappuccino Cafe offers cappuccino and desserts, as well as burgers, salads and sandwiches. (Greenhouse's menu is available at Cappuccino upon request.) For more information about Cappuccino Cafe, call (718) 238-8700.

Greenhouse Cafe is open daily for lunch and dinner, with a "Dining Before Hours," \$19.95 prix fixe lunch Monday through Saturday, from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., and a \$25 Sunday brunch with unlimited cocktails.

Pazzo

1007 Third Ave. at 100th Street, (718) 238-4747 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$14-\$25.

This restaurant is ornately decorated with arches of artificial flowers, private alcoves, mezzanines and elegant chairs and drapes. Pazzo, which means "crazy" in Italian, offers a variety of wines and martinis, as well as a mouth-watering long list of appetizers. Chef Theo Hernandez prepares Old World Italian favorites with contemporary accents. Daily highlights include roasted rack of lamb, blackened mahi-mahi and grilled jumbo shrimp with risotto. Pazzo also offers live entertainment Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights with dancing until 4 a.m. Open Tuesday through Sunday for lunch and dinner. Open Tuesday through Sunday for lunch and dinner.

Pearl Room

6201 Third Ave. at 82nd Street, (718) 833-6666 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$12-\$20.

This elegantly appointed, six-year-old restaurant offers American cuisine with an emphasis on fresh seafood. Chef-owner Anthony Brindisi's specials include avocado crab Napoleon with "lemon hollandaise," Brindisi's creamy white wine-lemon sauce, pepper-crusted tuna with a wasabi soy dipping sauce, and an oven-roasted Persian snapper with fresh crab meat and truffle sauce. Pearl Room also serves flat mignon, shell steaks, chicken and seafood, salads and pastas. The carbapop-sized vanilla ice cream ball — fried in banana bread — is a multi-sensory delight, says GO Brooklyn Editor Lisa Curtis. Pearl Room also offers seating in their heated dining patio. Open daily for lunch and dinner, with a \$19.95 prix fixe lunch from noon to 4 p.m., and Sunday brunch from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saint Germain

8303 Third Ave. at 83rd Street, (718) 745-8899 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$7-\$20.95.

Saint Germain reopened Provence en Boute at this location in August 2004. The French country-style interior decor is little changed, and they serve, as their menu affirms, "fine French bistro cuisine in the best Parisian tradition." Saint Germain, named for Paris' bohemian neighborhood, has a huge wine selection including several from France. Owner Jerome Vidy offers sweet crepes topped with fresh berries and chocolate sauce. For lunch there's Vidy's "moules a la marinere," steamed mussels in a Chardonnay wine broth. The appetizers include escargot sautéed in garlic, parsley and Pernod butter and "foie gras leek" (\$23 luxury featuring goose liver "over toasted shallot bread and berry reduction"). At dinner, they offer traditional dishes like steak au poivre, cooked in a green pepper cream, brandy and cream sauce and served with French fries or "magret de canard," breast of duck with sautéed spinach and a berry reduction. After it all, sample one of their fresh-baked desserts, such as "the Sultan," which is a chocolate biscuit topped with hazelnut, chocolate mousse and hazelnut mousse. Weekend brunch served till 4 p.m., an \$11.95 prix fixe lunch (including an entrée, mesclun salad and pastry) is served Tuesday through Friday and \$21.95 prix fixe dinner (including soup or salad, entrée and pastry) is served Tuesday through Thursday, and there are weekday two-for-one lunch and dinner specials, too. Closed Mondays.

Editor's note: These are a sampling of restaurants in the neighborhood. The list rotates, and it is not comprehensive. For more restaurants, go to www.brooklynpapers.com on the Web. If your restaurant is not listed and you would like to be, please contact GO Brooklyn Editor Lisa Curtis via e-mail at Curtis@BrooklynPapers.com.



Got chops

Chef Daniel Wu's Indonesian dishes are exciting fare

By Tina Barry
For The Brooklyn Papers

The bright yellow awning providing a note of good cheer among the bleak gray storefronts that define Atlantic Avenue in winter belongs to Mai, a Southeast Asian restaurant that opened in September.

Inside Mai (pronounced "My"), the scene's dining room's cream-colored walls glow with the light of glass sconces; the tables are glossy black lacquered wood; and matching benches are strewn with rose and apricot Indonesian pillows, their golden threads glinting in the subdued glow. Waitresses glide among the diners, pouring tea with the practiced gracefulness of Balinese dancers.

The restaurant's owner and chef is Daniel Wu, who is a partner in Manhattan's Jefferson and cooked at Cafe Asian.

"I serve light, healthy dishes with lots of seasonal vegetables," Wu told GO Brooklyn, defining his style. "I want to give people the opportunity to discover different produce and flavor combinations."

During a meal that journeyed through Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Singapore, each dish was vibrant with bright flashes of citrus and direct hits of fresh herbs.

"Take the 'mi quong,' a deep bowl of broth, chilies, Chinese ham and huge prawns that Wu described as typical Vietnamese street food. The stock is richly flavored with meat; the noodles are firm yet tender and surprisingly complex thanks to their turmeric-made. Slices of the spicy pork had the density of rich pate, while a sprinkling of ground peanuts gave the mixture a salty kick.

gar-shaped cylinder into a dip made of basil, mint, lime juice and a bit of chopped, fresh bird chile, (a fiery hot pepper associated with Caribbean cooking) and the dish comes to life.

Two stellar appetizers are the "cu ban," wok-fired monkfish eaten with a lettuce leaf wrapper, and "muc mong" a single, grilled squid stuffed with shrimp, glass noodles and shitake mushrooms. The monkfish, a salty, heavily seasoned hash of sorts, is too



He'll Wu you: (Clockwise from top left) The crispy shrimp pancake with mushroom and chives at Boerum Hill's Mai restaurant; grilled whole sea bass wrapped in a banana leaf; and Mai chef Daniel Wu.

strong to consume as is. Use the green as an edible scoop, top it with fresh mint and a crisp shrimp cracker, and the pungent filling is tamed by the vegetables. Equally delicious is the smoky, grilled squid, its stuffing chewy and tender, woody and sweet. Try it.

And don't pass up the dazzling "kan bakau." The entrée features a smallish fillet of pan-seared snapper with the sort of moist, silvery flakes I associate with smoked salmon. Velvety grilled zucchini and eggplant make worthy partners. Wu swirls the plate with an apricot-colored blend of coconut milk thickened slightly with ground custard (like a macadamia but crispier), then heightens it with lime juice and lemongrass. The sauce is a showstopper on its own, and a generous ensemble player beside the other ingredients.

I was just as impressed with the "vi xao gung," slices of succulent, rose duck breast rimmed with a deep layer of crisp-edged fat, and a leg as moist as confit that sat atop Chinese broccoli in a thin, fat bodied wine and ginger sauce.

For dessert, we should have ordered



He'll Wu you: (Clockwise from top left) The crispy shrimp pancake with mushroom and chives at Boerum Hill's Mai restaurant; grilled whole sea bass wrapped in a banana leaf; and Mai chef Daniel Wu.

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For dessert, we should have ordered

the fruit plate. The other two choices were more odd — at least to this writer's taste — than satisfying. One, a tapioca pudding served warm, was flavored with banana and cinnamon, then topped with crushed peanuts and grilled pieces of the fruit. It was slightly salty and subtly sweet; not bad, but nothing I'll develop a taste for. The same goes for the dense, somewhat grainy lime and coconut pudding, although the slices of Asian pear (a fruit that tastes like pear with the crisp texture of an apple) and perfectly ripe slivers of mango that accompanied the dessert were refreshing.

Instead, I'd conclude the meal with a pot of ginger tea. We leaned in close while the waitress whispered that the ginger was freshly grated, not dried. A vored with banana and cinnamon, then topped with crushed peanuts and grilled pieces of the fruit. It was slightly salty and subtly sweet; not bad, but nothing I'll develop a taste for. The same goes for the dense, somewhat grainy lime and coconut pudding, although the slices of Asian pear (a fruit that tastes like pear with the crisp texture of an apple) and perfectly ripe slivers of mango that accompanied the dessert were refreshing.

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Hipster taqueria

If the name doesn't give this Williamsburg canteen away, then let me explain.

The "74" dish at Taco Chulo is — you guessed it — tacos. Prepared by two Angelica Kitchen expats, Dija Amer and Greta Dana, the crisp shells are housemade and filled with mostly organic ingredients that include Niman Ranch pork.

Open since August, Taco Chulo — loosely translated — means "taco pimp." You'll understand why Amer and Dana, who also own the place, chose the name when you peruse their menu. Order the "Surf 'n Turf," a shrimp, potato, beans, baby carrots, salsa and crema taco or burrito, and you're invited to "pimp it up" with extras like sliced jalapeño peppers and "rajas" (roasted peppers and onions).

Pimping can relate to the decor, too. This is Williamsburg after all, home of the hipster, so forget paneled rooms hung with sombreros — no matter

how ironic that setting may be.

Here, one side of the room sports a curving, deep red wall; the ceiling is vivid sky blue and the bar is zinc. There's an ample supply of Mexican bottled and draught beers, Spanish wines, and how could any self-respecting place in this locale with such a strong sense of community fail to have a "Chulo's Chi-luhua" (inset), a lethal blend of tequila, grapefruit and lime juices served in a salt-rimmed glass, is the house drink.

Taco Chulo (318 Grand St. between Havemeyer Street and Williamsburg) accepts MasterCard and Visa. Tacos and burritos: \$4.50 to \$12; large plates and combos: \$9-\$14.50. The restaurant serves lunch and dinner daily. Weekend brunch is served, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Delivery is available to surrounding neighborhoods. For more information, call (718) 302-2465.

— Tina Barry

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Where to Go

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal

SAT, JAN 28

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

ICE SKATING: at the Wollman Rink in Prospect Park. Sessions at 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. \$5, \$3 children and seniors. \$5 skate rental. Enter the park at the junction of Ocean Avenue and Lincoln Road. (718) 965-8999.

WALKING TOUR: Mauricio Lorence hosts his Metro Tour Service, taking a walk through Fort Greene Park, Clinton Hill and Brooklyn Heights. \$25. 2 pm to 5 pm. Meet at Marriott Hotel Brooklyn, 333 Adams St. (718) 789-0430.

PERFORMANCE

MUSIC FROM CHINA: Brooklyn Public Library's Sunset Park branch presents music in honor of the Chinese New Year. 11:30 a.m. Fourth Avenue at 51st Street. (718) 507-2866. Free.

ARTS AT ST. ANN'S: presents Foundry Theater's "Major Bang, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Dirty Bomb," part suspense thriller, part magic act and part instructional seminar. \$25 at 4 p.m., \$30 at 8 p.m. 38 Water St. (718) 234-8779.

YOUTHWORKS: Brooklyn Arts Exchange presents original plays, choreography and performance work by young people, ages 7 to 18. \$15, \$10 members, \$8 low-income. 7 p.m. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-0018.

RHYTHM & BAM: presents Morris Day and The Time. Also, Sharon Jones and The Dap-Kings in a funk performance. \$20, \$30, \$35, 7:30 p.m. 30 West 4th St. (718) 234-8779.

BARGE MUSIC: Classical music concert of Mozart, Strauss, Francaix and Poulenc. \$35, \$30 seniors, \$25 students. 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 624-2083.

WINTER FOLLIES: Spoke the Hub presents its fourth annual event featuring more than 24 rising stars in dance. \$15, \$10 members, \$8 low-income. 7 p.m. 295 Douglas St. (718) 408-3234.

WINTER ONE-ACT FEST: Impact Theater hosts a festival of one-act performances of comedy, tragedy and everything in the middle. \$15, \$10 students and seniors. 8 p.m. Call for program. 190 Underhill Ave. (718) 852-2105.

GALLERY PLAYERS: presents romantic comedy "No You Like It." by William Shakespeare. \$15, \$12 children and seniors. 8 p.m. 199 14th St. (718) 832-0617.

HEIGHTS PLAYERS: presents Eugene O'Neill's "Ah, Wilderness!" at Spoke the Hub. \$10 seniors, students and children. 8 p.m. 26 Willow Place. (718) 237-2752.

CHILDREN

FILMS FOR KIDS: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch screens "Chicken Run" (2000). 11 a.m. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2105. Free.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Story time for toddlers with ABC's. 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. 111 106 Court St. (718) 246-4996. Free.

ARTY FACTS: Brooklyn Museum invites kids, ages 4 and older, to look at art and have art and crafts session. \$8 adults, \$4 seniors, free for children younger than 12. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000.

BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: hosts a workshop for families with special needs. "Signs of Winter." Kids learn about the signs of the changing seasons. Arts and crafts project follows. \$4, free for members. 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

PUPPETWORKS: presents a marionette performance of "Puss in Boots." \$8. 7 children. Recommended for ages 4 and older. 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street. (718) 965-3391.

LIVE MUSIC: Gustaf Yellowgold hosts a program of guitar, mandolin and songs. \$5, 2 p.m. (718) 965-0041. Spoke the Hub, 234 Fourth Ave. (718) 234-8779.

PUPPET SHOW: Talking Hands Theater presents Rudyard Kipling's "How the Elephant Got Its Trunk." \$7, \$5 children. Appropriate for ages 2 to 7. 7 p.m. Monster Gallery, 234 Fourth Ave. (718) 318-6280.

FAMILY PARTY: Brooklyn Museum celebrates Lunar New Year at its annual fundraising event to benefit its education division. Celebration is for Lunar New Year and activities include treasure hunts, art making, films, dance, music and food. \$25 per child, \$60 per adult. Family of four starts at \$150. 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000.

KIDS' MONTH: Brooklyn Arts Exchange hosts performances for young people, ages 7 to 18. \$8, \$5, \$10 members. 7 p.m. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-0018.

OTHER

STROLLING, SHOPPING & SIPPING: 28 neighborhood shops, galleries and restaurants in DUMBO host a day of fun. Noon to 7 p.m. Start at 111 Front St. at 48th St. (718) 222-2505. www.dumbo-newyork.com

PROTEUS GOWANUS: Travel-related themes explored by artists participating in the gallery's interdisciplinary travel exhibit and installation. Noon to 6 p.m. 443 Union St. (718) 243-1570. www.proteusgowanus.com. Free.

NEW MEMBERS: Ocean Parkway Jewish Center hosts a special luncheon after services to honor all new members. \$50 Ocean Parkway. (718) 436-4900.

LECTURE: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch presents a presentation of Dmitri Shostakovich. 2 p.m. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2105. Free.

BOOK TALK: Park Slope Jewish Center offers a discussion of "The Rabbi's Cat" by Joanne Sol. 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Call for location and registration. (718) 768-1453. Free.

OPEN HOUSE: Brooklyn Arts Council hosts a group exhibit of 22 artists in "Making Your Mark: Out Paper." 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. 55 Washington St. (718) 625-8800.

SAMPLE SALE: Pretty Piddle, a spa and beauty accessories store, hosts a sale before it relocates to DUMBO. Noon to 6 p.m. 433 Atlantic Ave. (718) 222-0033.

DINNER DANCE: The Heights Players celebrates its 50th anniversary at a celebration. \$75. 7 p.m. Garden at the Water, 400 Kent Ave. at Broadway in Williamsburg. Call for reservation. (718) 237-0750.

SUN, JAN 29

PERFORMANCE

CHORAL MUSIC: Grace Choral Society of Brooklyn and Spiritus at Anima present "Celebration and Longing: A Musical Journey Through the Psalms." \$15, \$12 in advance, \$10 students and seniors. 2 p.m. Grace Episcopal Church, 254 Hicks St. (718) 707-1411.

CONCERT: Park Slope Singers presents its winter concert featuring Schubert's Mass in G Major plus other works. \$10, \$5 seniors and students. 8 p.m. St. John's Episcopal Church, 50 John Place between Sixth and seventh avenues. (718) 789-2282.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM: presents "Artists the Centuries: Melita and Beethoven." Included admission of \$8, \$4 students and seniors, free for members. 3 p.m. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000.

ONE-ACT OPERA: Vertical Player Repertory presents a performance of "The Tempest." \$25, \$20 members. 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. 150 Baltic St. (718) 234-1662.

LECTURE: Congregation Beth Elohim hosts a course which explores the writings of Abraham Joshua Heschel, a Jewish leader in the 20th century. 7:30 p.m. Call for ticket info. 274 Garfield Place. (718) 768-3814.

ARTS AT ST. ANN'S: presents Foundry Theater's "Major Bang, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Dirty Bomb," part suspense thriller, part magic act and part instructional seminar. \$25, \$30 seniors and students. 8 p.m. 38 Water St. (718) 234-8779.

WEEK, FEB 1

BACINEMATE: presents the film series "Month of Malick." Tonight: "Badlands" (1973). \$10, 7 p.m. Discos with film writer Amy Taubin and producer Ed Pressman follows screening. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 777-7777. www.bacinate.org.

MEDITATION: Class with Western Buddhist teacher. 10:15 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. First Unitarian Congregational Society, 48 Montrose Place. (718) 496-5144.

ART WORKSHOP: Fresh Bread Books and Goods hosts a Valentine-making workshop. Use glitter and glue to make a holiday card. All ages welcome. 7 p.m. 123 Columbia St. (718) 443-8484.

ARTS AT ST. ANN'S: "Major Bang, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Dirty Bomb." \$25. 8 p.m. See Sat., Feb. 4.

THURS, FEB 2

KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: Families and professionals needing programs and services for children with disabilities are invited to attend a talk on advocacy skills for parents. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Heights branch, 280 Cadman Plaza West. (718) 677-6860. Free.

READING: St. Joseph's College presents award-winning author Jonathan Safran Foer. 12:40 p.m. 222 Clinton Ave. (718) 636-6855. Free.

BEIJING OPERA: Brooklyn Public Library, Dyer Heights branch, presents "Lingchong Sought Shelter from Death." A Chinese folktale. 3:15 p.m. 6822 13th Ave. (718) 748-6261. Free.

MUSIC FROM CHINA: Brooklyn Public Library, McKinley Park branch, presents "The Sound of the Ehu (bamboo fiddle) and the yangqin (hammered dulcimer)." 4 p.m. 6822 Ft. Hamilton Parkway. (718) 748-8001. Free.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH: Brooklyn Public Library's Conboy Island branch presents "Madame C.J. Walker," a solo theatrical piece by actor Jo Turner. Learn about life and times of Madame Walker, inventor and entrepreneur. 4 p.m. 1901 Memorial Ave. at West 19th St. (718) 265-3220. Free.

RECEPTION: Films by sculptor Jeff Joffe. "Paintings," 5 presented at 440 Gallery. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. 440 Sixth Ave. (718) 499-3844. Free.

COCKTAIL HOUR: Brooklyn Industries Design Collective hosts a retrospective exhibit. 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. 100 Smith St. (718) 599-7757. Free.

MEETING: Community Board 15 meets. 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. 131 Livingston St. (718) 332-3008.

BARNES AND NOBLE: presents Arthur Nierenstein, author of "Unsubstituted." 7 p.m. 267 Seventh Ave. (718) 852-9066. Free.

WINTER SPEAKER SERIES: Immaculate Heart of Mary H.C. Church presents Most Michael J. Curran. He speaks on Pope John Paul II's "The Gospel of Life." 7:30 p.m. 285 Ft. Hamilton Parkway. (718) 871-1310. Free.

MEETING: Bay Ridge Mental Health Council hosts a meeting. 7:30 p.m. Fort Hamilton Clinic, 8710 Fifth Ave. (718) 680-0000. Free.

BARGE MUSIC: Classical music concert of selections from Brahms, Schumann and Chopin. \$35, \$25 students. 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 624-2083.

HEBREW COURSE: Further your Hebrew skills in a conversational style, eight-week course. Students at the intermediate level are welcome. \$180, \$120 members. 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Park Slope Jewish Center, Eighth Avenue. (718) 768-1453.

MON, JAN 30

Sales Tax-Free Week Begins

DANCE WORKOUT: Mark Morris Dance Group presents Rhythm and Motion. Dance. Adult members class uses hip-hop, jazz, African, Latin and modern dance forms. \$12. 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. 3 Lafayette Ave. (718) 624-8928.

BEHIND THE SCENES OPERA: Series of six open rehearsals and classes on the opera production process as arranged by composer Susan Rosenthal. \$15. 7 p.m. \$10. 8 p.m. 227 Fourth Ave. (718) 631-3303.

BARNES & NOBLE: continues its four-week

and 14th Street. (718) 768-1453.

ARTS AT ST. ANN'S: "Major Bang, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Dirty Bomb." \$25. 8 p.m. See Sat., Feb. 4.

ONE-ACT PLAYS: The Howling Moon Company presents "The Brooklyn Plays," a one-act play festival. \$10. 8 p.m. Jan. for Broad Case, 333 Henry St. (717) 359-6234. www.spectacle.org/brooklynplays.

IMPACT THEATER: "The Tempest." 8 p.m. See Sat., Feb. 4.

FRI, FEB 3

HEALTHY EATING: Families First offers a talk "Is It Safe? How to Eat Well Today." \$25, \$20 members. 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. 230 Baltic St. (718) 236-1862.

BARGE MUSIC: Classical music concert of selections from Brahms, Schumann and Chopin. \$35, \$25 students. 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 624-2083.

ONE-ACT OPERA: Vertical Player Repertory presents a performance of Giacomo Puccini's "Tosca." \$25. 8 p.m. 217 Court St. (712) 539-2696.

ARTS AT ST. ANN'S: "Major Bang, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Dirty Bomb." \$30. 8 p.m. See Sat., Feb. 4.

IMPACT THEATER: "The Tempest." 8 p.m. See Sat., Feb. 4.

PHOTO COMPETITION: Brooklyn Public Library hosts its fifth annual photo and essay competition entitled, "My Brooklyn." Deadline to enter is March 31. Brooklyn Public Library, 190 Underhill Ave. (718) 965-3391.

SINGLES CLUB: Bay Ridge Club hosts a dinner for single men and women, ages 35 to 60. Call: (718) 745-8659.

ONE-ACT PLAYS: "The Brooklyn Plays." 8 p.m. See Thurs, Feb. 2.

SAT, FEB 4

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

ICE SKATING: at the Wollman Rink in Prospect Park. Sessions at 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. \$5, \$3 children and seniors. \$5 skate rental. Enter the park at the junction of Ocean Avenue and Lincoln Road. (718) 965-8999.

PERFORMANCE

ARTS AT ST. ANN'S: presents Foundry Theater's "Major Bang, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Dirty Bomb," part suspense thriller, part magic act and part instructional seminar. \$25 at 4 p.m., \$30 at 8 p.m. 38 Water St. (718) 234-8779.

BARGE MUSIC: Classical music concert "Winter seminar" by Schubert. \$35, \$25 students. 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 624-2083.

KBCC: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts presents Dance Brazil, in a program of traditional and contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance. \$15 to \$35. 8 p.m. Walt Whitman Theater, Brooklyn College, one block from the intersection of Flatbush and Nostrand avenues. (718) 951-4500.

FIRST WEEKEND: Brooklyn Arts Exchange hosts its monthly performance and discussion series featuring choreography, short plays and more. \$15, \$10 members. 8 p.m. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-0018.

IMPACT THEATER: presents Cage Theater Company's production of "The Tempest" by Shakespeare. \$15, \$12 students. 8 p.m. 190 Underhill Ave. (718) 965-3391.

BROOKLYN LYCEUM: In-house troupe "Impromptu Center/ICU" performs. \$10, \$4.5 p.m., 227 Fourth Ave. (718) 857-4816.

CHILDREN

SWIM LESSONS: NYC Parks and Recreation hosts registration for its winter learn-to-swim program. 9:30 a.m. to noon. Metropolitan Pool, Bedford and Metropolitan avenues, Williamsburg. For info, call 311. Free.

ARTY FACTS: Brooklyn Museum invites kids, ages 4 and older, to look at art and have art and crafts session. \$8 adults, \$4 seniors, free for children younger than 12. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000.

PUPPETWORKS: presents a marionette performance of "Puss in Boots." \$8. 7 children. Recommended for ages 4 and older. 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street. (718) 965-3391.

SEUSS: Celebration of the life and work of Dr. Seuss. Adults, advance participation and songs. Kids, \$5, adults free. 1 p.m. Lafayette Avenue Church, 85 S. Bedford St. (718) 498-9233.

PUPPET SHOW: Talking Hands Theater presents Rudyard Kipling's "How the Elephant Got Its Trunk." \$7, \$5 children. Appropriate for ages 2 to 7. 7 p.m. Monster Gallery, 234 Fourth Ave. (718) 318-6280.

AUTHOR TALK: Brooklyn Public Library, Central branch, presents historian Eric Foner as he reads from and discusses "Forever Free," his examination of the years of Emancipation and Reconstruction following the Civil War. 4 p.m. Also, Native Roots discusses her book "White Money/Black Power." 2 p.m. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

OTHER

KNIT ONE, PERL TWO: Creative Arts Studio hosts a "Pie-knit." Knit and mesh while working on your own creation. \$20, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. 310 Atlantic Ave. (718) 977-5060.

CINCO RECEPTION: Tabla Rasa Gallery hosts an artist talk with presentation by George Williams. How he speaks about connections between his wilderness travels and his urban landscape paintings. "Landscapes Urban and Wild." 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. 224 48th St. (718) 748-0450. Free.

FIRST SATURDAY: Brooklyn Museum hosts its monthly event of First Saturdays. Tonight's program features a mix of music and culture. Music with Brooklyn Philharmonic performs medieval French music and selections at 6 p.m.; arts and crafts, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; "American Identities" galleries at 7 p.m.; "Daughters of the Dust" (1991) at 8 p.m. and dance at 8:30 p.m. with music from the 1980s, from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. with DJ Emcee. 10:00 P.M. Event runs from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000. Free.

EXHIBIT: Clinton Hill Art Gallery presents an exhibit featuring 15 Brooklyn artists. Continued on page 8...

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OUR OPINION

Bridge 'protection'

THE TERRORISTS win again. For several months, Brooklyn drivers have been complaining about the two police squad cars that sit idling in the left lane — day and night, seven days a week — in both directions on the Brooklyn Bridge.

They are there, according to the NYPD, for "security reasons," but all they are doing is tying up traffic.

When contacted by the Brooklyn Papers, an NYPD spokesman could only say that the deployment is terror-related — but his

"no comment" spoke volumes. Clearly, there are some questions that "we the people" no longer have a right to ask.

What we remember most about those nervous days after 9-11 was our steadfast, defiant belief that we would not let the terrorists "win" by forcing us to change our way of life.

The larger concept, of course, was that we were not going to let the threat of terrorism define us as a people. But, alas, that is what we have done.

From the very start, when then-

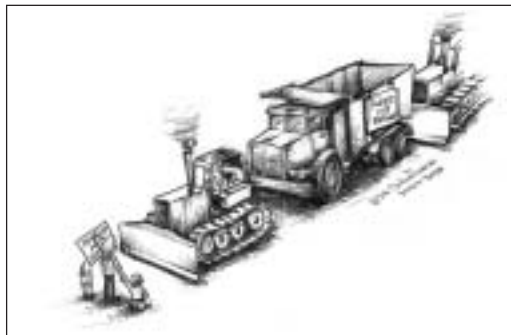
Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer grimly cautioned Americans to "watch what they say [and] watch what they do," to the most recent repudiation of American values, namely the federal government's spying on its own citizens, the so-called "War on Terror" has become a kitchen sink filled with the smelly detritus of prior efforts by government to curtail freedom.

Since 9-11, our government has asserted it could torture suspects, has routinely squelched debate by questioning dissenters' patriotism, has demanded guarantees from cultural groups that fu-

ture exhibits at Ground Zero would be expunged of any search for meaning, has imprisoned people without charging them or letting them see a lawyer, has emboldened rent-a-cops to demand the IDs of law-abiding citizens, has allowed police to search the bags of innocent people simply because their number came up, and has put four cop cars on the Brooklyn Bridge day and night with no explanation.

IN THE CASE of the squad cars, the most it will accomplish is send terrorists to the Manhattan Bridge.

ALL DRAWN OUT



Chris H. Fleming

LETTERS

I mean, really, why can't they just build a park?!

To the editor:

I hope somehow the powers that be will give further thought to the part of the Brooklyn Bridge "park" that is set aside for high-rise/luxury housing ("Ire over housing," Jan. 21).

Throughout the five boroughs, there is a tremendous rush towards building high-rise towers in formerly low-rise areas.

If the "park" planners truly took the long view, they will see the danger of adding these awful towers to our shoreline. We expect that kind of thing in Manhattan, but not in Brooklyn.

The planners say they need revenue to support the "park," but what they are doing is merely opening up the entire Brooklyn waterfront to exploitation.

This new residential enclave will create a demand for stores, restaurants, parking garages, gourmet groceries, cafes, etc. — it's a developers' dream come true — a

chance to create another city.

But there's trouble in River City. The quality of a neighborhood must be measured in terms of the level of commitment of its inhabitants. If you snatch away the joy and peace experienced by those who live here and maintain their homes so lovingly, these same individuals eventually become despondent and overshadowed, and in time, these homes are not maintained.

Please give us an honest-to-goodness real park.

Amanda Tree, Brooklyn Heights

Miss the Mark

To the editor:

I recently read in your paper about the proposal to tear down the Mark Lanes in Bay Ridge and replace it with a parking lot for the Century 21 department store

("In Brooklyn, bowling strikes out").

After getting past your reporter's sarcasm, as well as CB10 member Steve Harrison's excitement for the project, I, for one, was left to mourn our neighborhood bowling alley. It was a place where family and friends met to talk, laugh and encourage each other in a game of bowling.

I believe that communities are made up of homes supported with services, shops and jobs — but a community also needs places for residents to go and have fun; to commune with neighbors, meet old friends and spend quality time with family.

I feel lucky that this bowling alley was here while I raised my children. Bowling taught them math, teamwork, and how to behave politely in public.

I hope Bay Ridge doesn't become like those towns on Long Island where people pass through shopping, but no one knows his neighbors.

Christine Settino, Bay Ridge

Hang 'em high

To the editor:

I was trying to mind my own business, but the more I read of Ratner's Atlantic Yards project, the more infuriated I get.

He should be hung by his own wrecking balls.

Amy Lewenson, Brooklyn Heights

Same old same old

To the editor:

Gersh Kuntzman's recent article, "No-voice Felder's inauguration features what's her name" (Jan. 21), illustrated the obvious political hypocrisy of Councilmember Simcha Felder, but missed the same in others.

Consider how new Council Speaker Christine Quinn has removed the veil of

her Manhattan liberal independent reformer image to reveal that she is a seasoned Democratic party machine leader.

She has already committed to overturn the voters' wishes by considering repealing term limits. And her appointments to various council committee chairs speaks volumes.

Council members who are loyal to their respective county bosses (the ones who endorsed her candidacy for speaker) have been rewarded with "lulus" ranging from \$4,000 to \$28,000.

The average salary for a New Yorker is \$41,000 per year, yet every councilmember has a base salary of \$91,000 for a part-time job.

It's all about buying loyalty. Note as instructed by the speaker and those members will continue to receive the perks of office. Be an independent member and suffer the consequences. Everyone knows

the fix is in.

The five county Democratic bosses don't care if you are liberal or conservative, gay or straight, man or woman — they just want you to play ball.

If you do that, like Speaker Quinn is learning, you're one of the boys in the smoke-filled clubhouse back room!

Larry Penner, Great Neck

Send us a letter

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Fax: (718) 834-9278.

By e-mail: Letter@brooklynpapers.com

All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's name and neighborhood are published with the letter).

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




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The Mighty Quinn

New City Council Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan) took the reins of power and promptly doled out leadership positions (and raises, known as "lulus") to her loyal supporters — and even created a high-ranking job for the man who opposed

her. Most councilmembers got something — except Letitia James, who was left on the outside looking in. Here's how your councilmember fared (both professionally and financially) in the power shake-up at City Hall.

— Gersh Kuntzman

COUNCILMEMBER	BACKED THE RIGHT HORSE?	WHAT HE/SHE HAD	WHAT HE/SHE GOT	WHAT IT MEANS	LULU NET GAIN
 David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights)	Eventually, Yassky did not declare for Quinn until late in the process.	Chair, Waterfront Committee	Chair, Small Business Committee	Greater attention to small businesses in Brooklyn, if Yassky makes good on his promise.	\$0
 Bill DeBlasio (D-Park Slope)	No way! He ran against her.	Chair, General Welfare Committee	Retained his committee chair, but also got a new "assistant majority leader" position.	Quinn is saying "No hard feelings" by giving DeBlasio a no-show job.	\$15,000
 Letitia James (D-Prospect Heights)	No. Supported DeBlasio, even after he conceded.	Did not chair a committee	Zilch. Not only didn't get a chairmanship, but was taken off the Housing and Buildings committee, which she cherished.	Was slapped for not backing Quinn, but also for being on the outs with Brooklyn Democratic boss Vito Lopez, who backed Quinn.	\$0
 Vincent Gentile (D-Bay Ridge)	Backed DeBlasio, but likes Quinn.	Did not chair a committee	Chair of a newly created subcommittee on libraries	No hard feelings with the Speaker. And Gentile gets to focus on libraries, a big issue for him.	\$4,000
 James Oddo (R-Bath Beach)	Didn't commit to anyone — all the candidates were Democratic — but worked behind the scenes for Quinn because she backed his call for a Buildings Department task force.	Are you kidding? He's a Republican!	Will head the new, "Task Force on Operations and Improvement of the Department of Buildings."	Oddo's district mostly covers over-developed Starrett City. He says only a task force can "fix" the Department of Buildings and ensure that over-development is stopped throughout the city.	\$0 (already gets \$18,000 lulu as "minority leader")
 Domenic Recchia (D-Bensonhurst)	Backed Quinn from the start.	Chair, Cultural Affairs Committee	Retained his committee chair	Recchia wanted to stay with the committee.	\$0
 Sara Gonzalez (D-Sunset Park)	Could not be determined because Gonzalez does not typically return phone calls from the press.	Did not chair a committee	Chair, Juvenile Justice Committee, which was formerly a subcommittee.	Quinn wanted to expand this subcommittee into a full committee so it could "continue its good work," said a spokeswoman.	\$10,000

BROOKLYN BRIEFS

Indy bank condo plan put on hold

The Brooklyn Papers

A plan to convert a historic Cobble Hill bank into a six-story luxury condo was temporarily derailed on Wednesday when city landmarks officials took issue with the developer's bid to tear down an annex to the landmarked, 85-year-old Renaissance revival-style bank.

Landmarks Preservation Commission spokeswoman Diane Jackier said the panel believed that the condo could be built without demolishing the annex and other historic details.

The developer, Two Trees Management, would preserve the main hall of the 1922 Independence Bank building at Atlantic Avenue and Court Street, but add six stories on top. Its architect says he can't redesign without sacrificing the annex.

Community Board 6 has repeatedly rejected the developer's proposal, objecting to its height and style. The new limestone-and-brick building would rise 60-feet, violating the 50-foot limit of the Cobble Hill Historic District.

Assemblywoman Joan Millman (D-Brooklyn Heights) said the building "will only serve to encourage other developers to flout regulations" of the historic district.

— Ariella Cohen

Ratner paid for state's lawyers

The Brooklyn Papers

Take my lawyer, please.

Facing an environmental review by a state agency, developer Bruce Ratner recommended that the agency hire his law firm for the state's assessment of his Atlantic Yards mega-project.

Ratner suggested the firm of Sive, Paget Riesel in a letter that also guar-

anteed the Empire State Development Corporation that he would pay all the legal and consulting costs incurred during their environmental review of his \$3.5-billion area, residential and commercial project.

David Paget, a partner in the firm, was working as Ratner's lawyer when the developer's company wrote the

recommendation in February, 2004. He stopped working for the developer shortly before he began counseling the ESDC in September, according to the New York Observer, which obtained the document through a Freedom of Information request.

A coalition of block associations and landowners spearheaded by De-

velop Don't Destroy Brooklyn (DDDB) sued the ESDC and Ratner last week, claiming Paget's role tainted a decision made earlier this year to allow the developer to tear down six buildings in his project's footprint before the project has been formally approved.

The ESDC refused to comment on the litigation.

Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Carol Emdin refused to grant a temporary restraining order stopping Ratner from beginning his demolitions — although the developer has said his wrecking balls will remain out of sight until at least the next hearing, scheduled for Feb. 14.

— Ariella Cohen

Weeksville savior Maynard dies

Associated Press

Joan Maynard, who fought

to preserve a 19th-century settlement of free blacks called Weeksville, died Sunday. She was 77.

The death caused an outpouring of grief from people who appreciated Maynard's importance to black history in Brooklyn.

"She was one of the most extraordinary individuals ever to call Brooklyn home," said

Borough President Markowitz. "Through a singular determination, she made it her life's work to see that an important piece of African-American history, long buried in Brooklyn, was protected from demolition and preserved."

Once a flourishing community that included New York's first black police officer and first black woman physician, Weeksville had been largely forgotten when its remains were discovered in 1968 after historian James Hurley saw references to it in some 19th-century archives.

Hurley and a pilot went up in a small plane and spotted four wood-frame cottages hidden in an alley once called Hunterly Road — all that remained of Weeksville.

After an archaeological dig turned up artifacts including a slave's shackles, Weeksville was designated a New York City landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Maynard was a founding member of the Weeksville Society and served as president from 1972 to 1974, when she

Joan Maynard

became its executive director.

Restoring the cottages and turning them into a functioning museum was a daunting task, with setbacks including a break-in by crack addicts who did \$36,000 worth of damage.

"We thought it was going to take 10 years to build a museum when we started," Maynard said in 1996. "Frankly, it's amazing we're still alive."

But Maynard persisted, raising funds from the govern-

ment, corporations and individual donors. Her hard work was rewarded when the Weeksville houses were opened to the public at a June dedication ceremony.

"No one can say how many generations of Brooklyn children will grow up with a stronger, prouder sense of their own identity because of Joan," Markowitz said.

— with Gersh Kuntzman

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CHECKIN' IN WITH...

Lexy Funk

Brooklyn Industries — that purveyor of edgy, but always colorful, garments — is marking its sixth year in business with a retrospective exhibit of its original T-shirts. The company is more than just Brooklyn's gap, but has emerged as a symbol of the borough's effort to market a Day-Glo version of its post-industrial self. Even Borough President Markowitz wore a green BI logo T around town "until it shrank — in the wash!" he claimed. Our Ariella Cohen checked in with co-founder Lexy Funk at last week's party/exhibit at the Williamsburg store.

Q: How do you respond to people who criticize the branding of Brooklyn's urban identity in the name of fighting the good fight against gentrification?

A: I don't think that anyone has the monopoly on authentic Brooklyn. I moved to Williamsburg in 1991. It was almost completely Hispanic. I moved there because it was the cheapest place to live. I think the gentrification I've seen is mainly positive. It brings businesses to Brooklyn who are able to employ more people, give opportunity to young people. It revitalizes areas that were down and out.

Q: Are you comfortable calling creativity Brooklyn's new market outlet?

A: I am comfortable with creativity as long as it is economically viable.

Q: Do you manufacture in Brooklyn?

A: No. We began manufacturing our bags at North 15th Street and Wythe Avenue in what

was a predominantly industrial area. We named the company Brooklyn Industries after that factory. It became economically unviable for us to produce bags there. [They are now produced in Turkey, Canada, and other countries.]

Q: If you're not manufacturing in Brooklyn, what are the Brooklyn Industries now?

A: It's the creative force behind both the product and the company. We couldn't find garment workers proficient in bag-making here, but we had no problem finding brilliant creative people to design and collaborate in other ways.

Q: The city marketing office is now working on a new fashion line to highlight the borough's name on caps, T-shirts and "authentic replica vehicles." They plan to roll out the new line in April. Are you scared?

A: No.

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Pro volleyball is coming to Coney Is. beach this summer

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Papers

Get out your overly tight bikinis and your SPF 45 — Bruce Ratner is bringing professional beach volleyball to Coney Island.

Brooklyn Sports & Entertainment, an affiliate of Ratner's New Jersey Nets operation, has inked a deal with the AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour (the people who brought

us the hottest Olympic sport since Greco-Roman wrestling) to build a temporary 4,000-seat stadium on the beach at Coney Island.

The hot and sweaty, two-on-two team tournaments will take place Aug. 17-20. It's the AVP's first beachhead in New York City.

More than 150 of top professionals in the "sport" will compete — and the event will be televised live on NBC.

That last detail was even more important to Coney Islanders than the skimpy bikinis.

The TV coverage is going to help bring thousands of people to Coney Island," said Community Board 13 District Manager Chuck Reichenblatt, who predicted that the stadium plan would blitz through the review process like a Kerri



The AVP Professional Beach Volleyball tour will put up a temporary, 4,000-seat stadium, like this one in Chicago, on the Coney Island beach.

Walsh spike.

And Brooklyn's volleyball-fan-in-chief, Borough President Markowitz, was jumping for joy — not as high as Holly McPeak (but, then again, where was she during the transit strike?).

"Beach volleyball may have had its origins on the West Coast, but with an AVP tournament coming to Coney Island, the sport has hit the big time — Brooklyn," Markowitz said.

For those who don't want to pay to see the Sports Illustrated swimmer issue come to life, there will be plenty of preliminary contests on the beachfront flanking the stadium.

While many fans enjoy beach volleyball for less-than-sportsmanlike reasons, it's important to remember that American women won the gold and the bronze medals at the 2004 Athens games.

Gas tanks slow down work at Whole Foods construction site

The Brooklyn Papers

Initial construction of the first Whole Foods supermarket in Brooklyn — a marked departure for the two-acre lot, hard by the Gowanus Canal. Going back to the 19th century, the land had hosted a lake, a coal yard, an oil-processing company and a radiator manufacturer.

Oh, and it was also a junkyard at one point.

"They found a few things they didn't expect and now they have to eliminate the contaminants," said Javier Peres, the engineer for the state Department of Environmental

Conservation, who is overseeing the work.

"It's not routine, but sometimes this happens."

Before other cleanup measures can begin, Whole Foods must complete a full investigation of all damage to the site and solicit public comments.

"And boy are local activists ready."

"If you look out there, you see a day-glo green pond of sludge," said Marlene Donnelly, a member of the environmentalist group, FROGG.

"We need to make sure that Whole Foods finds out [what's down there] — and does everything it can to clean it, before they build."

— Ariella Cohen

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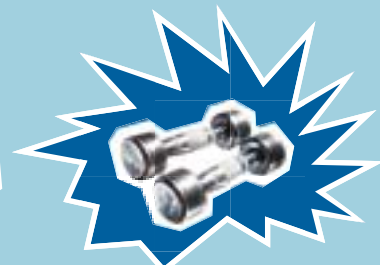
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